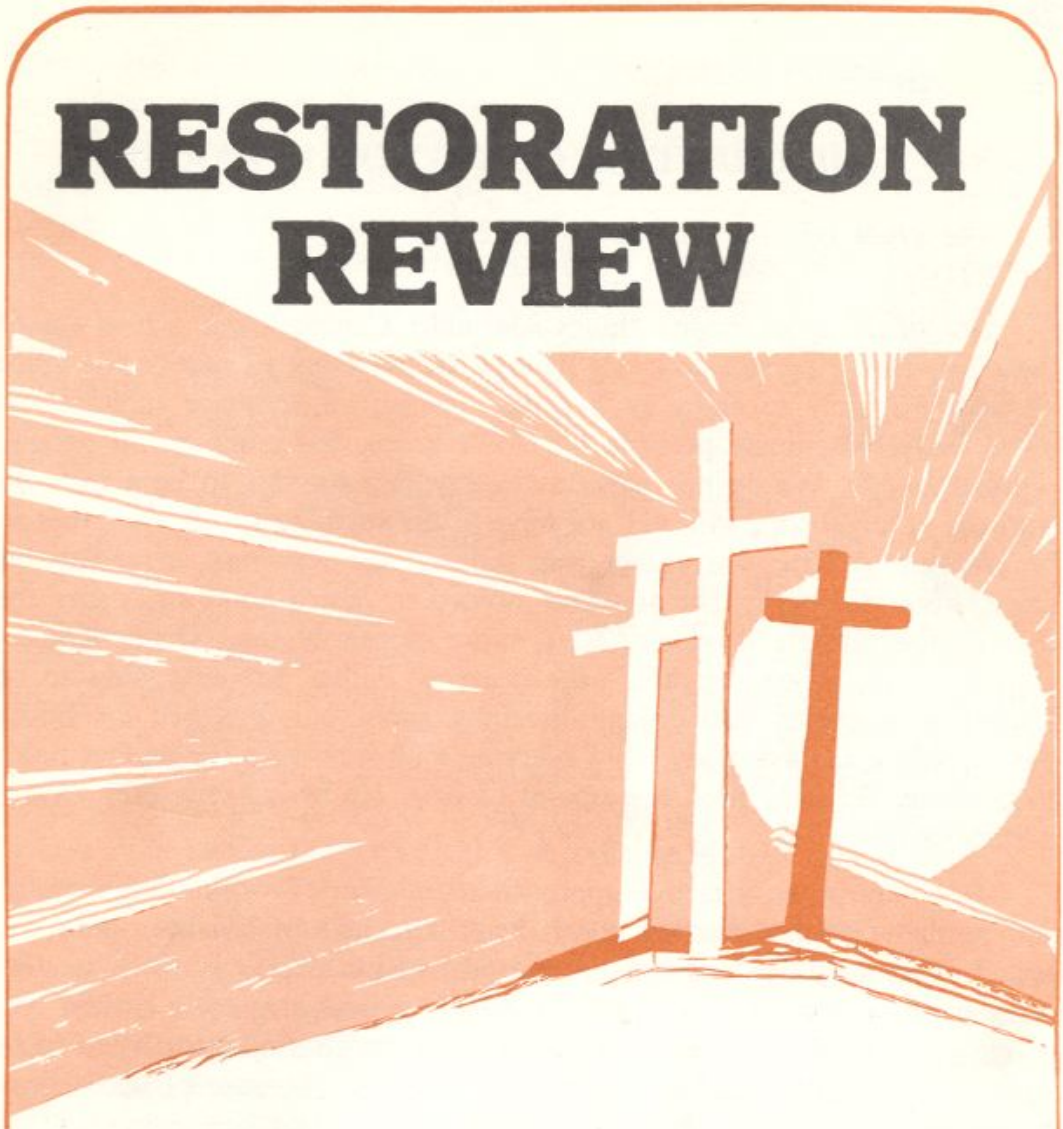
RESTORATION REVIEW



A good book is the very essence of a good man. His virtues survive in it, while the foibles and faults of his actual life are forgotten. All the goodly company of the excellent and the great sit around my table, or look down on me from yonder shelves, waiting patiently to answer my questions and enrich me with their widsom. A precious book is a foretaste of immortality. — *Theodore L. Cuyler*

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Jesus Today. . .

THE GRACE OF GOD WHO APPEARED

The grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men.—Tit. 2:11

One of the most incisive things Alexander Campbell ever wrote was to the effect that a person does not have to do anything to receive the grace of God, but only to enjoy its benefits. The above Scripture indicates as much. Salvation, made possible by God's grace, has come to all people, *unconditionally.* We do not have to do anything for this to be a fact. As with the prodigal son, who did not have to do anything to get his father to be gracious to him. The father was waiting and watching, extending his grace, *unconditionally.* The son only needed to return home to receive the joys of the father's goodness. Even more gloriously than Delta Airlines, who is "ready when you are," the heavenly Father does not have to be coaxed or wheedled into doing something about our wretched condition. He is ready and stays ready, with everything already done for us that needs to be done. We only need to respond to what He has already done. What a glorious truth!

This may be an effective approach to missionary work. Our message can be that God has already saved them. The ransom has been paid and sealed. They only need to drop by the post office to pick it up. Man does not have to cooperate with God to make His abundant grace a reality. It is a free gift. It only needs to be received if the benefits of the gift are to be realized. The apostle makes it clear that it is not "because of deeds done by us in righteousness" but *by his own mercy.* And how was this?—"When the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared." It is in this context that he places "the washing of regeneration and renewal in the Holy Spirit" (Tit. 3:4-5).

It is evident from these verses that the Christ is both the essence and the personification of the grace of God. He *is* God's grace. To say that the grace of God has appeared (Tit. 2:11) and that the goodness and loving kindness of God has appeared (Tit. 3:4) is to say that Jesus Christ has appeared. He is the glorious *epiphany,* the appearance of God. It is what Paul is saying in 2 Cor. 8:9: "You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that by his poverty you might be rich."

So, the coming of the Christ into this dark world *is* the grace of God. Grace is a *personal* reality, for it is a person that lifts us from our poverty and makes us rich. This is the essence of God's grace. Jesus did not come to help us save ourselves, nor *to* encourage us to save ourselves or even to make it possible for us to save ourselves. He came to *save* us.

This is the force of 1 Tim. 1:15, one of the "sure" passages of the pastorals: "The saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into *the* world to save sinners, and I am the foremost of sinners."

If the apostle could see himself as the number 1 sinner, we should have no problem including ourselves in that awesome category of *sinners,* and to realize that as such we are subject to God's wrath. The wages of sin can be but one thing, *death.* If we received what we deserve, we would all die in eternal separation from God. But "the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared," and that is what the gospel is all about. Since it is "the gospel of the grace of God" it is really good news. Jesus did not come with a better philosophy or a more effective scheme to improve the world. He came to save us. We can only conclude that if the world does realize that it is lost it is because it does not understand the meaning of sin.

The passage before us, Tit. 2:11-12, not only shows us that Jesus Christ is the grace of God that has appeared, but also that this grace trains or teaches us "to renounce irreligion (ungodliness) and worldly passions, and to live sober, upright, and godly lives in this world." It is surely one of the great passages of Holy Writ, so pregnant with meaning.

This means more than that the Scriptures provide guidelines for righteous living, for the Bible and the grace of God are not to be equated. Paul is referring to God's grace appearing *after* the Old Covenant Scriptures had been given, which shows that they in themselves were not sufficient to do the *training* he refers to. And it was *before* the New Testament became part of the Bible. So the training-in-grace can only be the gracious example of Jesus Christ.

Here is the key to understanding Christian ethics. It is much more than following (or *attempting* to follow) the Sermon on the Mount or cultivating (or *trying* to cultivate) Christian virtues. We are to be trained by God's grace, and that grace is personified in Jesus Christ. It is only *in* Christ, sustained by God's grace, that we can renounce ungodliness and worldly lusts and live sober, upright, and godly lives in this world, as Tit. 2:12 teaches. We can never follow a Book itself, or be sustained by its ideas, however hard we try. Grace cannot be reduced to the pages of any book. God's grace *appeared,* broke into human history, not in the form of a book, but a Person. It is that Person that makes us gracious, that sustains us and empowers us to do such things as renounce lust and affirm holiness of life.

To renounce or reject ungodliness calls for decisive action. We cannot sleep our way into heaven. As we are trained by grace, by the living presence of Christ within us by his indwelling Spirit, we renounce those worldly lusts that defile the human family, such as a mania for liquor, and inordinate craving for material possessions, sexual sins of all sorts, self-assertiveness, selfish pride, the lust to dominate. We are to take whatever action

necessary to reject from our lives all inordinate longing for power, pleasures, and possessions.

On the positive side, grace trains us to live a *changed* life—sober, upright, godly. To be sober is to have mastery of self, making the proper use of the desires and drives that are not sinful in themselves. To be upright is to be just and honest, to have a right relationship with others. To be godly is to be holy, to have a right relationship with God, to be reverent. All this we see in Jesus in perfection. He is our example, but he is more: *he is the source of God's grace*. By allowing him to make his home with us we are continually trained to renounce what is evil and affirm what is good.

This is what makes religion beautiful and not a legalistic liability.—*the Editor*

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THANKS FOR LOVING ME

It is a cold Saturday morning here in Denton, Texas. I am in our workshop working through a recent stack of mail, while Ouida is in the kitchen caring for the creaturely needs of our 18-month old granddaughter, Christie, who has been with us much of the time, since losing her daddy last May. How Ouida adores that child! It is something to behold. Ah, the difference that love makes! Illness, dirty diapers, and crying in the night mean nothing where there is love.

We are preparing to drive to Dallas with some fried chicken (from the restaurant we once owned, a bonus!) for Ouida's widowed mother, whom I call Mother Pitts, and her sister's family. Mother Pitts likes her home at the Christian Care Center, a retirement village sponsored by Churches of Christ. If anyone should have a place there it would be Mother Pitts, for all these years she has shared her sparse income with Church of Christ causes all over the world. She is the only person I ever knew to give a tithing of the insurance money from her husband's death to the church. She is incredibly beautiful at 86, inside and out, just like Ouida.

One of the letters at my side comes from Pasadena, California. It is from a brother who has been a guest in our home, who is now involved in mission research for Churches of Christ. The letter exudes with love. He is eager to read my history book which he had just received, one reason being his respect for the author, he says. He greets Ouida, "your beautiful wife," and he closes by saying, *I love you!*

(Christie just barged in, casing the joint to see what further damage she might do, with Ouida right behind her. As Ouida left, with Christie in tow, she reminded me it was time for me to take breakfast to an aged neighbor, whom we have watched after for years. Though he can afford it, he has a thing about nursing homes and refuses the attention he badly needs. Now 90 and alone, life is rough for him, and the little we do is hardly enough. Ouida shaves and barbers him, while I do other chores. He has apparently fallen in love with my wife, for he cannot praise her enough, but that is both understandable and forgivable. As I go through these love letters on my desk I am reminded that this is what our aged neighbor needs most of all, *love.* He often breaks down and weeps in our arms or on the phone. Once a proud and successful business man, he is now destitute for what he has never really had, *to love and to be loved.* I sometimes see him as the whole world in miniature, a microcosm, tossed upon a sea of despair, having never learned what life is all about. But the world is like that. It is the world that the Savior came into and died for, so that we might see how the Father loves us all, even when we are old and lonely and cranky.)

Well, the day is done and I am back at my desk, resolved to complete this piece before retiring. Our dear neighbor consumed the healthy pancakes that Ouida prepared for him with dispatch, despite his age, while bemoaning his failing health and expressing fear of tomorrow. That too is understandable and forgivable, I thought as I left his domicile. It figures that the world will moan and be fearful. Jesus wept for such a world.

We found Mother Pitts her same sweet, patient, Christ-like self, thinking of others more than herself, and never a complaint in this world. What a difference Jesus makes! But her memory has begun to betray her and Ouida has to find things for her and to remind her of unpaid bills. What a contrast, little Christie playing on her great grandmother’s lap. One is too young to talk, the other too old to remember! Even though it saddens Ouida, I am left to marvel as to how and why the Father put us together the way He did. Surely ageing relates in some way to what He will do with us in another world.

Back at my desk, with today’s mail added to what was already there, I read more love letters. A Church of Christ minister in Birmingham paid for his history book and scrawled across the invoice, *I love you!* The world can’t be all that dark when a fellow pays what he owes and turns the invoice into a love letter!

A letter does not have to speak directly of love, of course, in order to be a love letter. A brother writes from New Jersey to the effect that my history book should be in every Campbellite library, and a new correspondent writes from New York that he is thrilled to have discovered *Restoration Review,* and he wants all bound volumes available. Those too are love letters.

Love letters! Does this not describe the letters of the New Covenant Scriptures? They are love letters more than legal documents, and they must have impressed their recipients as such. *John loves us!, Peter loves us!, Paul loves us!* they must have thought, once their letters were read, even when they were sometimes critical. They must have been impressed when John the aged wrote: "We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren" (1 Jn. 3:14), and when Peter wrote: "Without having seen him you love him; though you do not now see him you believe in him and rejoice with unutterable and exalted joy" (1 Pet. 1:8). Such truths are breathtaking in their implications. Love letters!

So as I sit here in a little Texas city, far removed from most of you, reading your letters, I can say most sincerely in response, *thank you for loving me* (and Ouida). That of course includes the critical letters, for they too are an important part of being an editor and in being loved. In all this I must remind myself, however, as St. Francis insisted, that there is one thing more important than being loved, and that is *to love.* One might make it in this world without being loved, but not without loving. How much love was shown our Lord in the ordeal of the cross? Yet we appropriately sing, "Love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all."

As I grow older as an editor and more experienced in "brotherhood" affairs, I am more convinced than ever that a recovery of that love that hides a multitude of sins is our only hope for renewal as a people. We have had enough debates and confrontations, and we have divided and sub-divided to the point of making ourselves ridiculous. We must rely upon the very Book we claim to follow and concede that only love has the power "to bind everything together in perfect harmony" (Col. 2:14). When we love each other even as He loves us, a new horizon will come into view for our people. This must include those with the most repulsive warts, the worst hangups, the most serious errors, and the most sectarian attitude.

And one day they too will say *thank you for loving me.* And we will find ourselves a united people without realizing just how it happened.

Well, the day is done. Tomorrow Ouida will accompany me to Burleson, Texas, a few miles below Ft. Worth, where we have a "free" church that is really getting with it, mainly because they have tired of sectarian hate and are learning to love. I plan to teach them about what Paul says about the Holy Spirit in *Romans.* He doesn't even mention the Spirit for four full chapters, but when he does, *Wow!* And before he is through he is writing about the *joy* and *power* of the Spirit. I will urge them to be a joy-filled, Spirit-filled and a Spirit-powered church, which is what a Church of Christ in Texas ought to be—for a change!

Ouida has long since put Christie to bed, so I will repair to the kitchen in hopes that my dear wife will join me in a bowl of grape-nuts. She sometimes begs off until she hears me crunching mine. If I crunch long enough, I am certain to have her across the table from me, bowl in hand. It just shows what love will do!—*the Editor.*

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INKY AND I

It was a radical change going from icy, freezing Michigan to warm, sunny Florida. A layover in Tampa enabled me to look the place over, inspecting an airport that may well excel DFW in modernity and strolling in spring-like weather. I was met in West Palm Beach by Tom Hafer, who ministers to a Christian Church in that city, who bore me to the Gold Coast Christian Camp where I was part of the program for a men's retreat, which attracted brothers from all three wings of the Movement. We took a close look at principles both from the Scriptures and from the great documents of our history that will make a difference in the way we treat each other, if we will heed them.

Ron Mobley of the First Christian Church in Boca Raton took me to the home of Bob and Caroline Weinischke for the next two nights, while I addressed area churches. Since Bob and Caroline were engaged elsewhere until after my bedtime, I was left in their spacious home alone. Except for Inky, a miniature dachshund, who is as black as midnight and as suspicious as he is black. Realizing that I was intruding upon his domain, I sued for peace. But he wanted no part of me, not at first anyway. I even knelt at my end of the long hall separating us, beckoning to him. He responded with muffled growls, retreated a few feet, then growled some more, It helped some for me to call his name and to speak lovingly, even entreatingly. He would venture a few feet towards me, then retreat. It would have suited him fine if I had got lost. He wanted no part of me, but I was determined to cultivate some measure of fellowship, for, after all, two of God's living creatures should not spend the night together as enemies.

Besides I don't like to be growled at, whether by man or by beast. *Inky, please love me!,* I pleaded. But he would only stand at a distance and scrutinize me, suspiciously. He said to me in dog language, *Go away!* I may have been hurt but I was undaunted. Realizing that a gentleman should not impose himself even on an animal, I staked off my part of the house and minded my own affairs, while Inky negotiated his part. The size of the home made peaceful coexistence an alternative. But this hardly satisfied the dachshund (I want to say Datsun, but that is an automobile, isn't it?), for he would now and again come to the

door of my room, study me further, impose a few low-key growls, and retreat, obviously perturbed by my invasion.

As the hours passed Inky became less resentful and I felt a little more accepted, though 1 was aware that our relationship was one of toleration, not real fellowship. It was when he ventured close enough to give me a good old canine smell that I sensed real progress. I tried to play it cool, for one wins the heart of neither man nor beast by overdoing it. It was when he at last licked my hand, initiating me into his community, that I felt loved and accepted, a real brother. We spent the rest of the evening talking about the condition of the world. Dogs are apparently having as hard a time of it as human beings, though Inky is well aware of his blessings, living in a rich man's house. He now seemed willing for me to share that blessing with him, at least for the weekend.

It was an adventure in brotherhood, with the situation being pretty much the same, whether with man or beast. I saw all over again that God's creatures cannot be brothers so long as they stand at a distance and growl at each other. Had I only growled back at Inky—and can't you see that!—there would never have been a covenant between us, sealed by a kiss. He would have been *there* and I *here,* with nothing ever happening except an occasional bark. We could of course have had an occasional debate or listed our grievances. He was, after all, different from me, being too black, too little, too much like a dog. I was too big, too tall, and too much like other creatures he had met. We clearly had sufficient reasons to have remained separated. But Inky seemed to realize that we have the same Creator, so he too was willing to bow down, even to kiss.

But even if its a dog, one has to put forth a hand.—*the Editor*

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MYTHS OF THE RESTORATION MOVEMENT (1)

W. Carl Ketcherside

I have learned a great deal about the art of meditation as I have grown older. One of the things that has been precious to me is the fact that the word *meditate* in the Hebrew means "chewing the cud." The early Hebrews constituted an agrarian and pastoral society. As the herdsmen and shepherds sat close to their flocks as dusk began to descend, they saw them regurgitate what they had eaten, form it into a ball and chew it over and over to extract all of the nourishment from it.

The shepherds were aware that much the same process took place in their minds as they sought to digest the thoughts which they had learned from others or had ascertained from their own rationalizations. It was only natural that they would think of their ponderings and reflections as “Chewing the cud.” Certain animals are physical ruminants, man is a mental ruminant. I think it hardly unlikely that many will deny that, in our present culture, meditation is becoming a lost art. In the Middle Ages it was encouraged, and contemplative societies flourished. I am sure you’ll pardon me if I sound like a resurrected patriarch by pointing out the literature, poetry and songs of the long ago had a depth about them that many of our current productions cannot equal. I attribute this to the fact that they were written from the depths of the’ heart, whereas a lot of modern stuff is skimmed off the top of our heads, which have lost something since we discarded wearing hats.

But enough of this. I want to do a little series about some of the conclusions I have reached with reference to that illusory something we have come to call “the restoration movement.” I thought of labeling the articles “Milking Sacred Cows.” I decided against it, not so much because of those doing the milking as out of respect for the cows. God made cows, but they are not responsible for being made gods. The golden calf which Aaron made could not help it. It is ignorance, superstition and traditional disrespect for God and His revelation which make an otherwise innocent Hereford or Guernsey an object of worship. And it is generally a priestcraft that makes the switch.

I shall actually be writing about the myths of restoration. And I shall try not to “myth the point.” I had to put that in before some of my critics thought of it and claimed originality for it. The truth is, I will welcome criticism. I have had a lot of it, much from other editors who can scarcely be trusted to read aright what another editor writes. But I have outlived a lot of my critics and outloved a bunch of those that remain. I am no longer under heavy fire. The bombardment has ceased. That is a strange position for me to be in and I shall try to write in such a manner as “to smoke out a new set of critics from the bushes.”

That may be more difficult than it appears at first. I feel that a lot of those who entered the fray and shouted loudest at first, have concluded that I was right in a lot of what I was saying. They have chosen to retreat instead of to surrender. Obviously they cannot be expected to announce that they have been wrong all of their lives, like I did. They would lose their prestige. I didn’t have any to start with, so I couldn’t lose any. As a matter-of-fact I may have gained a little. I know that I certainly feel better and it took a heavy load off my shoulders to confess that I had been in error, and wasn’t as perfect in my thinking as I had always thought, and honestly led others to believe. I was not cut out for the role of playing God and gave it up.

A goodly number of folk have thought that I should not write about *our* myths. They feel that we have not yet cleared up all of those among our good Baptist, Methodist or Church of God friends, and there is no use of getting our folks all stirred up, when we could be writing about the errors of the Mormons or Mennonites which, incidentally, are not in the same class or category. The only thing they have in common is that both begin with "M." But I am getting old and time is running out. I do not think I will be able to correct all the faults of the Baptists and Presbyterians. They have plenty of fault-finders of their own. Besides, it takes someone like me to write like this.

Young people cannot do it because they fall into two classes. Either they are naive and starry-eyed and think there's nothing wrong with us, or they know so much that is amiss they have given up hope and jumped ship in midstream and gone down "unwept, unhonored and unsung." Those who are middle-aged and in what is called "the prime of life" are too busy fighting other brethren over symptoms. They have no time to sit down and analyze the cause. They occupy their time tomahawking each other over cups, classes and colleges; or over societies, socials and saxphones, until they have never really stepped to one side and thought it through. And we either have to come apart a little way, or we will come apart altogether. I know because I was the respected sachem for our tribe, and if I do say so, I swung a pretty mean hatchet in those days.

I have concluded that you have to arrive at a point in life where those who may stone you do you a favor. Then you can say what you really think. You cannot be fired because you cannot be hired. No one can contract your sphere of influence because you are not under contract. It is a little like being not under law but under grace. That makes you free. And one of the things you are free from is fear of what men can do to you. When I was twenty-five and "breathing out threatenings and slaughter" against all who disagreed with me, I can see now that it was a cover for my inferiority. I suspect that I was afraid of my shadow. It is beautiful to arrive at the point where you are no longer afraid of the "valley of the shadow."

One question I am frequently asked is what I propose to do with those who have died believing these myths about "the restoration movement", if they turn out to be myths. I do not propose to do anything with them. I regard them, and I suspect God regards them, exactly as those who were mistaken about other movements like the reformation and the renaissance. I do not believe any of us will be judged on our relationship to any movement, but to Jesus Christ. One can believe in Christ and not be attached to any historical movement begun by men, just like he can be a member of any such movement and scarcely believe in Jesus at all. God adds him to the only thing he needs to be a member of.

We need, for our own sanity (and saintliness) to get over the idea that any of us will be saved by being right on things. We can be right about Jesus and wrong about a lot of things and still be saved. If we are wrong about Jesus we can be right about everything else and still be lost. Being ignorant is not a sin so long as it is involuntary. If it were none of us would stand a ghost of a chance. It is a part of the human predicament to which all of us are heirs. It is voluntary ignorance which is always a sin. One of the most outstanding blessings to come to us is that God made our hope dependent upon faith in a person rather than in knowledge of a list of things.

If the latter had been the case we could never be sure if we were saved. We could never be certain that we were correct about enough things, or about the right ones, to make it to glory. We might be right about nine things and wrong or ignorant about a tenth and have the pearly gate slammed shut in our faces. It isn't that way, praise God. "If anyone imagines that he knows something, he does not yet know as he ought to know. But if one loves God, one is known by him" (1 Corinthians 8:3). Because of their position on baptism, members of the Church of Christ have always said, "It is easier to get into heaven than into the Baptist Church." They need to be careful lest it be said "Because of their legalism it is easier to get into heaven than into the Church of Christ."

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HOW TO BE RECEIVED WITH OPEN ARMS

Most of us in Churches of Christ-Christian Churches have a rather hazy view of the Ecumenical Movement in general and the World Council of Churches in particular, and yet as a "unity people," which we are supposed to be, we should have substantial interest in what has been going on.

In one manner of speaking the Ecumenical Movement is as old as the New Covenant Scriptures, for they tell us that "This Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world" (Mt. 24:14). The phrase *in all the world* in Greek is "*oikoumene,*' from which we get *ecumenical,* meaning world-wide. The Ecumenical Movement, therefore, is an assortment of councils, agencies, churches from all the world dedicated to the world-wide witness of a united church. The movement has been tied closely to missions, its aim being to plant an undivided Church of Christ in every non-Christian nation in the world.

The Ecumenical Movement began in 1910 in Edinburgh, Scotland as a world missionary conference that brought together missionary leaders from many denominations. Realizing that any hope for unity demanded a hard look at differences, they created the

World Conference on Faith and Order, which was named for their intention to study the faith and order of the various denominations in hope of moving closer together. This evolved into the World Council of Churches in 1948 in Amsterdam, Holland. The council has met something like once a decade, pioneering in world church union and service. By 1961 at the New Delhi, India gathering the member-churches reached 197, with Pentecostal and Russian Orthodox churches taking membership. Since then the number has further increased with African churches becoming members.

A glance at the member-churches should enlarge one's view of what might be called "the Christian world." There are, for example, six denominations from Indonesia, including the Protestant Christian Batak Church. From Hungary there is the Reformed Church of Hungary. From Austria there is the Evangelical Church of the Augsburgian and Helvetic Confession, and from Egypt is the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria. From China there is a denomination called Church of Christ in China, but they are not "our" people. Out of all the long list of churches "our" folk have but two listings: from Canada is Churches of Christ (Disciples) and from the U.S.A. is the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). From the earliest days of the Ecumenical Movement the Disciples of Christ have played a leading role. The rest of us of the Stone-Campbell Movement have had nothing to do with these developments, which is odd in view of the fact that we belong to a Movement that was born of a passion for unity.

Some churches beside ourselves have steered clear of these world endeavors for various reasons, some political, some theological. The World Council has been accused of everything from being communistic to being atheistic and liberal. But it is noteworthy that churches that were once suspicious are now a part of the effort, such as Pentecostal, African, and Russian denominations. When the Russian Orthodox Church became a member it issued this statement, which reads as if it might have come from our own heritage.

> The Russian Orthodox Church is aware of the difficulties along the road towards the oneness of all Christians in the Church, and she is grateful to the Almighty for the mercy he has revealed in helping disunited Christendom to realize the sinfulness of this division and the duty incumbent upon it to achieve unity. She sees in the joint activities of the Churches an effective manifestation of that consciousness, which is directed towards finding ways of restoring the lost unity of all Christians.

Apart from the geographical reference, that might have come from the pen of Thomas Campbell! The Pentecostal churches that joined were from Chile, and they were welcomed not only because older denominations sought fellowship with such younger churches, but

also because it was believed the Pentecostals would add a spiritual dimension to the world organization. For those who suppose the council lacks theological guts it might be pointed out that from the outset these ecumenical leaders have avoided “mere togetherness” and have sought “an authentic Christian confession based upon the Scriptures,” as their own records reveal.

While no one has looked for a miracle in these ecumenical efforts, it is of moment that they continue to make the effort. There own leaders often express disappointment in their inability to make much headway, but they nonetheless hang in, believing that “The church will one day be one,” as their own leaders put it. They are at least doing *something*, while those of us who preach unity with such vigor seem to do less.

One response to these ecumenical efforts especially interests me, for it sounds like something right out of the Tennessee-Texas Churches of Christ or maybe the midwest Christian Churches.

In the formative period the invitation to become a part of the world effort went out to “all Christian Communions throughout the world which confess Our Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour,” which sounds as if it was not exactly without theological guts. But the invitation at first went out only to Protestants. By 1919 they decided to invite the Roman Catholics also, issuing the invitation to the pope himself. The pontiff, Benedict XV, was most cordial to the delegation that called on him, but his official response was resoundingly negative. It may well have a familiar ring to many of our readers:

> The Holy Father, after having thanked them for their visit, stated that as successor of St. Peter and Vicar of Christ he had no greater desire than that there should be one fold and one Shepherd. His Holiness added that the teaching and practice of the Roman Catholic Church regarding the visible unity of the Church of Christ was well known to everybody and therefore it would not be possible for the Catholic Church to take part in such a Congress as the one proposed.
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> His Holiness, however, by no means wishes to disapprove of the Congress in question for those who are not in union with the Chair of Peter; on the contrary, he earnestly desires and prays that, if the Congress is practicable, those who take part in it may, by the grace of God, see the light and become reunited to the visible Head of the Church, by whom they will be received with open arms.

This was 1919, and it is to the credit of the Roman church that it has softened its attitude toward the Ecumenical Movement in recent decades. In fact, Pope John XXIII in 1960 created a Secretariat for the Promotion of Christian Unity, which made it possible for the Roman church to send representatives to the World Council as "observers." At the same time Pope John went on record expressing his brotherly feelings toward "all other Christians." The Disciples of Christ are among those who have carried on bi-lateral conversations with the Roman church.

This does not mean, of course, that the Roman church has changed its basic position in reference to unity, but only a happier climate for dialogue. The executive committee of the World Council took official note of this in reporting that "the creation of the Secretariat does not mean that any of the fundamental differences which exist between the Roman Catholic Church and the churches in the World Council of Churches have been solved. "

One can feel for those ecumenical leaders who made the initial overtures to the Roman church, believing that it should be included in an invitation to "all Christian Communions throughout the world which confess Our Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour," only to be told that they would be received with open arms whenever they "see the light" and find their unity in the pope.

But isn't it something like this that "the Restoration Movement" is saying to the Christian world even in 1982? Like the pope in 1919, if not today, we will gladly receive all other believers with open arms *on our terms.* That of course is sectarian, not ecumenical, whether it be the pope or the elders of the Sixth and Izzard Church of Christ in Little Rock.

What is wrong with the basis for acceptance of each other as issued by the churches of the world—those who confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour—and why can we not all receive each other on that proposition? We have *much* (nearly everything in fact) in common with all those who believe that Jesus is Lord, especially in a pagan, humanistic world like ours. *Believers* should receive each other with open arms (period). We only make a mockery of our plea for unity when we base it on the peculiarities of the Restoration plea, even when it is assumed that those peculiarities are right.

Thomas Campbell, a true ecumenist, taught us that even when we are right in our scriptural deductions we cannot impose them on others as terms of communion *until they see the connection.* And he was taught by St. Paul, who in Rom. 15:7 pled that we receive each other on the same grounds that Christ received us, which was by God's grace as a free gift. We must be gracious, not demanding, in receiving others.

In an atmosphere of accepting and forbearing love we can bear witness to any vital truths we believe we have to offer from our peculiar heritage or from Scripture. Why should not Churches of Christ and Christian Churches be involved in the Ecumenical Movement? If we are really a unity movement as we claim, one would suppose we would be excited over the opportunity of being with believers from over 200 denominations from all over the world, *in pursuit of unity.*

Any old sect will receive one with open arms if he will kow-tow to the demands of that sect. But to be magnanimous, gracious, and ecumenical is to receive all other believers *as equals* on the basis of their devotion to Jesus Christ.

To receive others with open arms *on party terms* has never cultivated brotherly love and fellowship, and it never will. Jesus received us with open arms even when we were wrong. We are most Christian when we receive our sisters and brothers even when they are in error. It is not likely that there are any other kind. This mentality of preaching unity and being separatists keeps others from seeing what we have to offer. We are a great people with an impressive heritage, but this is obscured so long as we suppose that we can't have anything to do with other churches.—*the Editor*

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RESTORATIONISM: SOME QUESTIONS

At the outset of this essay I must confess to my suspicion of all *isms,* whether provincialism, sectarianism, or Americanism. The dictionary sees *ism* as a word of sorts, defining it as "a doctrine, theory, system," which is innocent enough within itself. But *isms* tend to be exclusive and self-righteous. Americanism suggests "America right or wrong," not simply loyalty to one's country. There may be some *isms* that are tolerable, but as a rule they imply bigotry, narrowness, and pettiness. Restorationism is one of these. It is a terribly bad word, and it is tragic that it ever became associated with a unity movement. It is like putting the mean old wolf in bed with Little Red Riding Hood.

Restoration is itself a meaningful motif, properly defined. It can be used to mean renewal, "renewal through recovery," as some are saying, referring to restoring to the church (or a person) its true Christian character. Or restoration might be used in reference to restoring man back to God. Or it might be used as a synonym for reformation, as our pioneers sometimes used it, or as a means of reformation. Campbell, for instance, would refer to "a restoration of the original gospel and order of things," such as "to restore a pure speech to the household of faith." But restorationism is something different.

Restorationism has these unmistakable characteristics:

1. It believes that the New Covenant Scriptures provide a fixed pattern for the church, which makes it possible for that true church to be reproduced in any generation, not unlike reinstituting the game of baseball from the rule book.

2. The true church apostatized to the point that it no longer existed on the earth. While such men as Luther sought to reform the church, this was useless, for the apostate church could not be reformed. The true church must be restored. This means that the churches of the reformation are false churches and that their members are not true Christians.

3. Once the true church is restored, it sees itself as the only New Testament church, all others being false, for it has structured itself after the New Testament pattern.

4. This makes intervening history beside the point, for all that matters is going back to the first century and reproducing the church revealed in the New Testament.

That there have been by one man's count 176 restorationist churches, each supposing itself to be the true church, does not seem to dampen the enthusiasm for this approach to the Christian faith. Each one simply ignores the others, insisting that it and it alone is the faithful church. The Mormons are a classic illustration of this doctrine, *restorationism.*

While this doctrine has always been present in the Stone-Campbell unity movement, it was not. the thinking of the original pioneers, who thought of themselves as reformers and their efforts as "the New Reformation." But two churches eventually emerging from this movement, the Church of Christ and the Christian Church/Church of Christ, have a strong restorationist tradition, which is being questioned by some of their own people. We are hoping that the following questions may be of help in the reevaluation now taking place.

1. *How could the New Covenant Scriptures constitute the pattern for the church when the church existed before the Scriptures?*

While the church as the Body of Christ became a reality on Pentecost in about 30 A.D., it was a long time before the "New Testament" existed. There was no way, therefore, for that part of the Bible to serve as the pattern for the "ideal church" that presumably existed.

2. *Were the New Covenant Scriptures written to provide a pattern for the church or were they written because there was already a pattern?*

We should remember that many Christians lived and died without ever seeing or hearing of what we call "the New Testament." Paul did not write 1 Cor. 11 in order to layout a pattern for the Lord's supper, for they had been observing the supper for years

before he ever wrote those words. He was correcting abuses. Had there been no abuses, he might never have written at all. Still they had "a pattern," if we wish to use that word, which was the example of Jesus Christ. They had the Old Covenant Scriptures, which they no doubt found helpful, and they had certain "prophets and teachers," as in the church at Antioch, as well as occasional visits from the apostles or their assistants. But they had no rule book on how to operate. The books or letters of the New Covenant grew out of problems that the early churches faced, so they served as "mid-course corrections" and further information (as time made necessary), but there is no way to get a blueprint or a "constitution" out of them. Scripture, yes; a fixed pattern for the church for all ages, no.

3. *Is the idea of a single, uniform pattern of organization and worship of the church in the Scriptures a fact or an illusion?*

An honest reading of the Scriptures can yield only the conclusion that restorationism rests upon an illusion. No church in Scripture is all that much like any other church. They were all *Christian*, to be sure, and Jesus was their ideal, but there is no evidence that they were all organized in exactly the same way or "worshipped" (with five specific acts?) precisely alike. To make a case for such a uniform pattern one is forced to resort to unwarranted generalization of examples. For instance, there is no hard evidence that a single church ever had what we call congregational singing, and one cannot prove that any church, not even the one at Corinth, ever took up a collection during a Sunday assembly. Such things are our own arrangement, based upon the "spirit" of Scripture. This is of course all right, but we should realize that we are not really following "the pattern" when we do such things.

4. *Is the idea of "the true church" of Scripture a fact or an illusion?*

There is no one church in Scripture, nor all of them together, that serves as a suitable standard for the church through the ages. There may be one or two among "the seven churches" of Revelation that received no censure, but we know very little about them. From the whole of the early church's experience, including the apostolic letters addressed to them, we get a good idea of what the Church of Christ on earth is to be for all time, but to speak of "the true church of the New Testament" is misleading. The idea that the church had "a golden age" in the first century and that our task is to recover that gold is an illusion. The church of the first century was much like the church today—sinful, weak, erring, and struggling, but still the Body of Christ! Look at Corinth. As bad as they were, the apostle still said to them, *You are the Body of Christ.*

5. *What proof is there that the church so apostatized as to cease to exist?*

This proposition, so basic to restorationism, is not only sheer assumption but contradicts the very nature of the church as the Body of Christ. Jesus promised that all the powers of the Hadean world could not dissolve the church, and history is replete with the presence of faithful followers throughout the ages. Besides, the church at Corinth was still the church and had not dissolved, even when it was not all that faithful. Who is to say when a church loses its candlestick and ceases to be the light of God in this dark world? Never forget the principle of the faithful remnant. Christ has always had his faithful ones, as in Rev. 3:4: "You have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their garments; and they will walk with me in white, for they are worthy." They are not only his church, but *in* his church, the wheat and the tares growing together. And *he* will one day root out the tares. It is just as well that we keep hands off.

6. *Do not the continual divisions spawned by restoration ism indicate that there is something frightfully wrong with the doctrine?*

Can we go before the world with 176 different versions of "the true church," none of which will have fellowship with the others, and expect the world to take us seriously? There is surely a better approach than restorationism.

But you will ask if there is not a standard of some kind, a common denominator whereby we draw some line of fellowship. The Republican Methodists who became the first "Christian Church" back in 1794 may provide us an answer when they wrote out their principles, one of which was, *Christian character the only basis of fellowship.*

Maybe we started off right, only to go wrong by making all sorts of opinions and interpretations (even if correct ones) the basis of fellowship.—*the Editor*

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BOOK NOTES

If you are interested in serious Bible study. we highly recommend the 18-volume *Daily Bible Study* of the New Testament by William Barclay. You will treasure the set as a lifetime study, and by special purchase we are prepared to offer them at only 79.00 for the set, postpaid. This is the beautiful soft cover edition, the revised edition.

So popular is the above set that plans are under way to do with the Old Testament what the late Dr. Barclay did with the New. Same format and style, same easy-to-read, practical approach. Genesis (vol. I), Leviticus, and Daniel are available at 5.95 each,

postpaid. Others will in time follow. I have been reading Genesis and find it exciting. You might want to start your set with it.

We agree with the *Christian Herald* that the *New Westminster Dictionary of the Bible* is "a goldmine of information about every major topic in the Bible." We can supply it for 16.95, postpaid.

We have a new supply of *In Search or God's Ideal Woman,* by Dorothy Pape, a missionary who writes out of a lifetime of being a woman in a man's church. She not only deals with being a single and a widow and a wife, but with various ministries in the church. 6.50 postpaid.

James W. Sire, an English professor, has done the church a service with his *Scripture Twisting* in which he deals with 20 ways the Bible is misread and abused, especially by cults like the Mormons and the Witnesses. He treats such fallacies as inaccurate quotation, twisted translation, ignoring the context, and word play. It is a fine study in how *not* to interpret Scripture. 5.50 postpaid.

If you do not read devotional material as part of your spiritual discipline, we suggest you give it a try by using Anne White's *Dayspring,* which provides a pertinent line from Scripture and a meditation upon it for every day in the year. It is a book that sparkles with gems of truth. 4.95 postpaid.

You can have two of Elton Trueblood's books in inexpensive reprints, *Confronting Christ* and *Alternative to Futility* at only 1.75 each, postpaid.

Interpreting Revelation by Merrill Tenney may well be the most important book you could read on the last book of the Bible. It is 6.95 postpaid.

If you are interested in the church's role in this technological age, you should read Howard Snyder's two books, *The Community of the King* at 4.95, and *The Problem of Wineskins* at 5.50.

For 3.00 we will send you 18 back copies of this journal, postpaid, selected at random from several years back.

We have three bound volumes of this paper, covering four years of publication. *Principles of Unity and Fellowship* (1977) and *The Ancient Order* (1978) are 5.50 each. *Blessed Are the Peacemakers* and *With All the Mind,* a double volume, 1979-80, is 8.50. This year and last will be available as a double volume early in 1983.

Except for our own bound volumes and the history book, advertised on back page, we ask that you pay in advance on all book orders, for bookkeeping is too much of a problem for us. Thank you.

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OUR CHANGING WORLD

There is a move on to create the World Peace Tax Fund, which would allow conscientious objectors to war to pay 56% of their taxes (the percentage of the federal budget now going to the military) into a special fund for peaceful purposes. There are presently 14 organizations working for such legislation. Besides the "peace churches" such as the Quakers and Mennonites, there is support from the U. S. Catholic Conference, United Church of Christ, and United Methodist Church.

A Disciples of Christ minister, Roger N. Carstensen, has begun the Institute for Biblical Renewal, which is dedicated to stamping out Biblical illiteracy. While the Disciples are supportive, he describes it as his own "Faith enterprise" and is funded by private donations. He issues some exciting materials for Bible study that take the students to the Bible itself. If you would like more information, write him at 337 S. Milledge Ave., Athens, Ga. 30605.

Arnold Hardin, a minister among the "conservative" (anti-Herald of Truth) Churches of Christ, was so impressed with an editorial by Reuel Lemmons of the *Firm Foundation*, that he reproduced it in his own *The Persuader.* One paragraph reads: "The times demand original thought. It has been so long since many in the church have had a bright new idea we would be uncomfortable with one. One of the tragedies of our times is sterile thinking. We think the same thoughts and accept the same conclusions of our predecessors without question and without productive thinking."

The bulletin of a church in Kansas says this about itself: "The Rossville Christian Church is an undenominational congregation with no creed but Christ and no book save the sacred word. The government is simple in that it is presided over by elders and deacons selected in a democratic manner and chosen to fulfill their offices as detailed in the New Testament. This church has congregational autonomy, the right of the congregation to self-government. The minister is regarded as minister, teacher, and evangelist, and holds no official authority exceeding any other member." The bulletin also states that the church's

terms of fellowship "shall be as broad as the conditions of salvation and identical with them,"

Churches these days are giving a lot of attention to saving the home, presumably because they realize that it is about to get away from us. Even the Free Will Baptists are involved. In their *Contact* magazine recently they rewrote one familiar line of Scripture to read, "What shall it profit a man if he win the whole world and lose his own family." Giving advice to both man and wife, they advise the man to talk to his wife for 30 minutes each day and to keep going out on dates (with his wife, that is!). The woman is urged never to nag and to reduce her wants in order to meet the family budget. They insist that for the Christian the acid test of one's faith is to show love at home.

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As this issue goes to press 535 of our subscribers have purchased *The Stone-Campbell Movement: An Anecdotal History of Three Churches* by Leroy Garrett (not counting those sold by the publisher), and here are some of the responses we have received. You might want to join them in the reading of this new history of our people. The price is 19.95 if you send a check with your order; if we bill you the price is 22.25, including postage and handling.

I have received my copy of *The Stone-Campbell Movement* and have begun with great interest to read.—*Lynn Hieronymous, Lincoln Christian College.*

It is the first 700-page book I have read in six days. This is one book that will be required reading for all my children.—*Bob Lewis, Montgomery, AL.* (of "Conservative" Church of Christ)

Thank you for your book and the kind words about the "non-class" people. I hope and pray we can live up to them.—*Terry Bouchelle, Lewisville, Tx.*

It certainly deserves a place next to Garrison-DeGroot in every Campbellite library.—*Comer Shacklett, Westfield, N.J.* (Disciple of Christ)

I must tell you how delighted and inspired I was by your work. The book is destined to become a classic in the field of Restoration history.—*Doug Hale, Smithlawn Church of Christ, Lubbock, Tx.*

This book is different in many ways from the rest of the histories of the movement. The main difference is that it is not written from a sectarian standpoint. Brother Garrett does not condemn any of the "parties," but simply states how the divisions took place.—*Larry Miles, in book review submitted to Work and Work* (premillennial Churches of Christ)

It will become famous, not alone for what it contains but from what is omitted. The selection of the pioneers was superb. The conservatives, the liberals, and the idiosyncratics, all came in for their share. It resurrected men who have been placed on the back shelf, and I confess to have learned a lot about some of those who were really "characters" and who lend color to any movement.—*Carl Ketcherside. St. Louis, Mo.*

It is unusually well written.—*Reg Westmoreland, chairman, Dept. of Journalism, North Texas State University.*

It is excellent, balanced, sympathetic, and yet commendably objective. You've treated us non-Sunday School folks very kindly, maybe more than we generally deserve.—*Tom Langford, Texas Tech U., Lubbock.*

Your keen alert perceptivity is reflected on every page. Perhaps you have selected the proper time for entrance into our situation. Hopefully there are concerned ones who will take advantage of the fruits of your years of study.—*L. E. Terry, Kansas City, Mo.*

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